Clearing The Air

CREATING A SMOKE-FREE WORKPLACE

Alberta
COMMUNITY AND
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

Clearing The Air

Creating a Smoke-Free Workplace

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Introduction

Overview

Smoking in the workplace is a serious health issue, an alarming economic concern, and a growing legal issue.

Smoking costs the employer

The health care costs of smoking are well documented. However, the economic costs which accrue to employers are less well known.

Workers who smoke average four more sick days per year than non-smoking employees. In addition, the smoking ritual occupies an average of 30 minutes per day. As a result, each worker who smokes can create one week of zero productivity per year. The cost of this lack of productivity is further compounded by the increased cleaning and maintenance charges caused by the smoke itself.

Demand for smoke-free workplace increasing

In recent years researchers have found that employees who do not smoke are at risk from tobacco smoke in the workplace. The issue of second-hand smoke has resulted in court cases in which employees have argued their right to work in a safe, smoke-free environment. Because two-thirds of Canadians do not smoke, the demand for a smoke-free workplace is increasing.

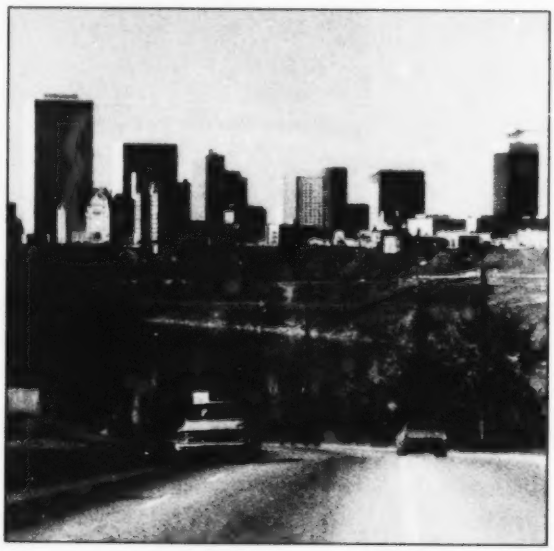
These health, economic, and legal issues make it important that you consider how you will deal with smoking in your organization. You may find that it is in everyone's best interest to institute a smoke-reduction or smoke-free policy.

This booklet can help you

This booklet is designed to help you determine the best kind of smoking policy for your organization. It outlines the important roles that smoking and non-smoking employees have in developing and implementing the policy. It provides effective methods for communicating the policy and shows how to support and reinforce the policy.

A smoke-free workplace is a better workplace

A smoke-free or smoke-reduction policy can improve the health, productivity and morale of your employees. It is our objective to assist you in implementing the best type of policy for your organization in a positive and effective manner.



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Smoking in the Workplace

A Burning Issue

Exposure to smoke worries non-smokers

Over two-thirds of Canadians do not smoke. Many of these individuals are becoming concerned about the health consequences of their involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke in the workplace. Recent evidence confirms that people who do not smoke and who are exposed to smoke for long periods experience detrimental health effects.

Private sector creating smoke-free environments

In the private sector, companies such as Shell, Campbell's Soup, Boeing, Insurance Corporation of British Columbia, Toronto Globe and Mail, and several Canadian hospitals such as the Misericordia in Edmonton, have addressed the issue of tobacco smoke in their work environment. Further, Canadian Air Lines, Air Canada, Greyhound and Via Rail offer smoke-free travel for their passengers. Hotels are offering smoke-free rooms, restaurants are providing smoke-free areas and car rental agencies are offering smoke-free cars.

Public sector creating smoke-free environments

In the public sector, smoke in the workplace has been addressed by Provincial governments, the two Territories and the Federal government with respect to their own employees and public programming. To date, 73 Canadian municipalities have non-smoking ordinances. Edmonton and Red Deer, along with 18 other municipalities, include the workplace within their non-smoking ordinance.

Non-smoking becoming norm

Such actions recognize that non-smoking is increasingly becoming the norm in Canada. Estimates are that for every two workers who do not smoke in the workplace, there is one who does. As the World Health Organization has urged, measures must be taken to "ensure non-smokers receive protection, to which they are entitled, from involuntary exposure to tobacco smoke."

Health Consequences

Most employees want smoke-free workplaces

Surveys have repeatedly concluded that respondents experience physical discomfort in the presence of second-hand smoke. Increasingly, employees are becoming aware that besides the immediate discomfort, there could be long-term health consequences.

In a 1986 survey of Alberta Social Services and Community Health employees, 54.5 per cent of respondents said they were bothered by tobacco smoke in the workplace. In the same survey, 84 per cent agreed with the statement that smoke in the workplace can adversely affect the health of smoking and non-smoking employees.

These kinds of concerns have implications for the psychological well-being and morale of employees.

Non-smokers experience smoke-related illnesses

Increasingly, people who do not smoke are suffering from smoke-related illnesses. In a study by the Alberta Cancer Board, 72.9 per cent of respondents reported exposure to smoke in the workplace. (Meleshko 1986)

In a policy statement on cigarette smoking approved by The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (September 21, 1986), the following statement was made:

"...convincing evidence now shows that 'passive smoking' (the exposure of non-smokers to 'second-hand' smoke from nearby smokers) is a major cause of illness in infants and children, exacerbates heart and lung disease, leads to smaller, sicker babies and probably causes lung cancer in non-smokers."

Just the presence of smoke is a problem

Tobacco smoke is an extremely fine aerosol containing at least 3,800 components, including 54 known or probable cancer-causing agents and poisons. Individuals inhaling tobacco smoke (i.e. non-smoking employees), breathe both mainstream and sidestream smoke, which is called passive smoking.

Mainstream smoke is that which is exhaled by the person smoking. Sidestream smoke rises from the burning end of an idling cigarette. Sidestream smoke is the more toxic, because the contaminants are burned off at a lower temperature and released intact and unfiltered into the environment.

The case against passive smoking well documented

Evidence that tobacco smoke in the air poses a significant health hazard is mounting. The following are some findings from recent studies:

Second-hand smoke is a cause of disease, including lung cancer, in healthy non-smokers. (Surgeon General 1986)

After only one hour in a smoke-filled room, a non-smoker inhales as much cancer-causing agents as if he had smoked 15 non-filter or 35 filter-tipped cigarettes. (Collishaw 1982)

The results of the Canada Health Survey indicate that 21 percent of Canadians have a health condition that is aggravated by exposure to tobacco smoke. (Chronic Disease Canada 1983; 4:9-11)

...We conclude that chronic exposure to tobacco smoke in the work environment is deleterious to the non-smoker and significantly reduces small-airway function." (White and Froeb 1980)

The simple separation of smokers and non-smokers within the same air space may reduce, but does not eliminate the exposure of non-smokers to environmental tobacco smoke. (Surgeon General 1986)

Smoking compounds increase risk of industrial lung disease

From an industrial perspective, smoking adds to the risk of lung disease in workers in the asbestos, rubber, coal, textile, uranium and chemical industries. The evidence suggests that the risk of smoking far exceeds the risk of exposure to toxic industrial hazards among these workers. (Korcok 1986)

Curtailing workplace smoke the only answer

"The health hazards of smoking are well known and well documented. Recent scientific studies show that second-hand and sidestream smoke affect non-smokers as well. Because of this, it becomes more important to find ways to limit exposure to tobacco smoke. Curtailing smoking in the workplace is one effective way of doing this. It not only reinforces current smoking and health campaigns, but it supports the rights of people wishing to work in a smoke-free area." Jake Epp, National Health Minister, Towards A Smoke-Free Workplace Conference, May 5, 1986 pretaped presentation.

Economic Consequences

Employers pay the direct costs caused by smoke in the workplace

For employers, smoke in the workplace creates significant economic consequences. It has been estimated that these costs can approach $5,000 per smoking employee per year. (Weis 1981) Direct expenses include the increased annual costs for damage to furnishings and equipment, and the additional costs for maintenance and routine cleaning.

Employers pay the indirect costs caused by smoke in the workplace

The indirect costs of tobacco smoke in the workplace, while not as easy to measure, are nevertheless significant. For example, on average, the smoking ritual alone takes 30 minutes per day per smoking employee. This means the act of lighting up, inhaling and butting out consumes an average of about 17 working days per smoker annually.

In addition, average absenteeism rates reveal that employees who smoke are absent from work 50 per cent more often than those who do not smoke. (Weis 1981) Associated with these higher absenteeism rates are the facts that workers who smoke

- are 50 per cent more likely to be hospitalized
- require 20 per cent more dental care
- have twice the on-the-job accident rate (Weis 1981).
- are more likely to take early disability retirement.

Smoke in the workplace has an impact on everyone

As research has shown, people who do not smoke and are exposed to cigarette smoke suffer many of the same illnesses as those who do. This means that employers who do not have smoke-free workplaces bear a significantly higher cost of doing business.

Legal Perspective

Second-hand smoke has become a legal issue

In recent years, smoking has become a legal issue as well as a social one. In light of the increasing evidence about the medical consequences of second-hand smoke, non-smoking employees who are exposed to smoke can be considered to be at risk. Smoke in the workplace is being perceived as a controllable health risk, and not one which is inherent to a job.

Employers and employees have found support for this position through common law, the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Workers' Compensation Act, all of which require employers to protect the health of employees by providing a safe workplace.

Second-hand smoke has become a union grievance

Federal public service unions have unanimously endorsed a recommendation that smoking in the workplace be restricted to separately exhausted smoking areas which are remote from work areas.

Several grievances have been launched pertaining to tobacco smoke in the workplace. In Canada the first case to focus on the dangers of second-hand smoke was upheld by the Public Service Staff Relations Board. This decision was later reversed on appeal by the Federal Court of Canada. In a two to one decision, the Federal Court judges did not dispute the finding that tobacco smoke was a dangerous substance, but they concluded that the Dangerous Substances Safety Standard was not intended to apply to tobacco smoke. The matter may be appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Second-hand smoke has become a labour code issue

In another recent case, an Air Canada baggage handler refused to work in a large smoke-filled trailer on the tarmac at Toronto's Pearson International Airport. He successfully cited a recent amendment to the Labour Code which grants federal public servants the right to refuse work which poses a danger to health.

Common law precedents set

Cases under common law which have recently been reported in the press include that of a de Havilland clerk who fought for a smoke-free workplace and won $3,600 in sickness back pay. In addition, the Alberta Human Rights Commission ruled that the rights of an asthmatic were denied when smoking was permitted in an educational institution.

Banning smoking isn't a human right issue

The Alberta Human Rights Commission has affirmed that prohibiting smoking in the workplace and the practice of hiring non-smoking employees in preference to smoking employees does not violate the terms of the Individual's Rights Protection Act. These are solely management decisions, unless otherwise specified by contract.

Building for Success

The Dynamics of Change

Overview

The lifetime behaviours of adults are frequently resistant to change. These established behaviours will be challenged when you move to implement smoke-reduction policies in your workplace.

It is therefore critical you understand the dynamics that come into play when people are faced with change. If you understand these dynamics and follow the four principles outlined in this section, you will be better equipped to work with your employees to facilitate the process of implementation, gaining cooperation and acceptance. This will allow you to improve employee health with minimum friction and discontent.

Principle #1
Establish a need for change

The first principle to follow when assisting individuals to alter their behaviour is to establish a perceived need for change. You can create an awareness of the smoking issue, particularly as it pertains to the hazards of second-hand smoke, through education programs, health surveys or discussion.

Your first task is to learn what your employees already know about smoke in their workplace. You must then determine how to channel additional information to them.

Principle #2
Create a justification for change

Increased awareness about the subject can stimulate an interest in knowing more. This paves the way for a re-education phase. The second principle to follow is providing a rational justification for changing the current situation. This principle assumes people are capable of discerning facts and adjusting their actions accordingly.

What people believe and what they actually do are sometimes at odds. However, at minimum, providing them with the facts surrounding the issue can increase their willingness to recognize the universal benefits of a policy to limit smoking in the workplace.

Principle #3
Build on positive support

The third principle involved focuses on good news. Employees may be more willing to cooperate with a non-smoking policy if there is an indication of widespread support for such a policy.

Employee support is crucial and can be fostered in a number of ways:

- communication of survey results
- open discussion sessions
- involvement of workers in the policy development process
- offering Quit Smoking programs
- instituting rewards and recognition programs.

Principle #4
Provide support and reinforcement

The fourth principle involves providing support and reinforcement in the workplace over the long term, which builds on short-term successes. An annual review of the actions taken and progress made, with necessary modifications, can help reinforce successful change efforts.

Program Benefits

Overview

One of the prerequisites for behavioural change is understanding why the change is needed. A smoke-reduction policy benefits both the employer and the employee. Once these benefits are recognized, an educational and communication program can be built around them.

Benefits to the employer

A smoke-reduction or smoke-free policy produces the following benefits for an employer:

- increase in overall productivity
- decrease in maintenance costs
- decrease in risk of fires
- increase in employee morale
- creation of safer, healthier workplaces.

These types of policies also produce a decrease in costs related to health care (i.e. absenteeism, premature death and disability, and insurance costs).

Benefits to the employee

Employees benefit from a smoke-free workplace in a number of ways:

- a recognition of company concern for the welfare of workers
- a possible solution to the conflict between smoking and non-smoking employees
- support for those who are bothered by smoke
- support for employees in their attempt to stop smoking
- improvement in employee morale.

Employee satisfaction

Companies that carefully plan and implement policies which restrict smoking report that employees accept these policies with a subsequent improvement of morale and productivity. Conversely, in companies where there is no policy regarding smoking, attempts by non-smoking employees to achieve a smoke-free workspace are often viewed as "trouble-making" behaviour.

It is important to develop a policy that is appropriate to the specific needs of your workplace, then implement that policy through a cooperative effort at all levels. By including your workers in policy development and implementation, resentment that an imposed policy may create can be averted.

Employee health commitment

The development and implementation of policies which restrict smoking in the workplace are more easily achieved within organizations which are committed to employee health. This commitment can be demonstrated by including a statement which supports the promotion of employee health within the corporate mission statement of your organization. This commitment to employee health can then be demonstrated through the creation of a work environment which encourages and supports good health practices.

A policy which limits or prohibits smoking in the workplace is a solid first step. This can be done as a stand-alone policy or part of a broader clean air policy.

Design and Implementation

Policy Directions and Options

Overview

Once you have determined that you wish to implement a policy to limit smoke in your workplace, the first step will be to decide which type of policy best suits your organization. Involving employees in this decision can result in smoother implementation of the policy selected. This will be discussed more fully in the "Communication" section of this document.

Non-health related policy

There are different policy directions which an employer can choose. The most basic direction is an adherence to externally imposed by-laws or a stated desire to protect equipment. However, if the intent is to protect and improve your employees' health, then a more complete policy should be considered.

Option #1 Establish a smoke-free workplace

A smoke-free workplace is the most effective way of ensuring that smoke is not circulating in the work environment.

Option #2 Designate smoking areas

Another option is to call for a smoke-free workplace, except for specially designated smoking areas. This will limit smoking to certain locations and recognizes that some employees will continue to smoke.

This approach assumes the existence or installation of separate ventilation for smoking areas. However, better ventilation may be prohibitively expensive. To serve a room of 80-90 m^3 volume, for 10 smokers, it would cost between $5,000 and $10,000 to install a ventilation system.

Air needs to be completely changed up to 100 times per hour to remove traces of smoke emitted by cigarettes. (Morgan 1982) Most modern buildings change air only once per hour. This problem has been further aggravated by the construction of centrally air-conditioned buildings which limit intake of fresh air to save on energy costs. (Wigle 1983)

Option reinforcement

Either of these two options can be reinforced by hiring only new employees who are willing to comply with the company's smoke-free policy or are willing to not smoke at work.

Initial Planning

Appoint a coordinator

A rationale for change can be established through preliminary research which is followed by an education program explaining the benefits of the policy. To help ensure successful policy implementation, it is critical to identify an individual with a strong commitment to the policy to act as coordinator.

Research the issue

It is important to review the tobacco literature, what other companies have done in terms of policies, cessation/incentive programs, support mechanisms and results. A bibliography of tobacco related information, sample surveys and successful policies can be reviewed in the Alberta Tobacco Resource Directory available from:

Health Promotion and Program Development
Alberta Community and Occupational Health
Fifth Floor, Seventh Street Plaza
10030 - 107 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 3E4

Survey employees

A survey of employee opinions can be distributed to a random sample or all employees during the initial information-gathering stage. Information to be gathered could include:

- the number of smoking and non-smoking employees in each area or department
- attitudes regarding smoking in the workplace
- attitudes regarding implementation of a smoke reduction or elimination policy
- how a smoking policy and cessation program would affect the behaviour of smoking employees.

Show management commitment

Company executives must be visibly and actively involved in the process from start to finish. The policy must be supported by key managers at all levels — including those who smoke — and must be seen as part of the organization's overall personnel policy. Management must determine which goals are to be achieved by the policy and provide a strong rationale for these goals. This message must then be clearly communicated to the employees, either through an open meeting, discussion at staff meetings and/or by written communication.

Seek employee involvement

Success can be enhanced by involving employees, either at the developmental and/or implementation stage. Exactly how and when employees become involved depend on a number of factors:

- management style
- existing relationships between employees and management
- who initiated the policy
- size of the organization
- existing support for smoking restriction.

Create employee awareness

Employees who smoke must be made aware of the effects of smoke on others. At the same time, non-smoking employees must be sensitive to the difficulties people who smoke may have in trying to limit their smoking during working hours. It must be emphasized that the policy is being developed to promote the health of all employees.

Solicit union support

Solicit union support at the outset. If this issue is not specifically addressed through union contracts, the employer has the right to determine the direction. However, collaboration is essential to ensure smooth implementation.

Create an advisory committee

Consider appointing an advisory committee with six to nine representatives from throughout the organization, including:

- union and non-union workers
- representation from the range of employee classifications
- representation from various departments and locations
- smoking and non-smoking employees and formers smokers
- males and females.

Makeup of advisory committee

Members of the committee should be well-respected individuals with an interest in the issue and an ability to motivate others. It is also important that a number of the committee members have a thorough understanding of the organization and how it works, so that practical implementation steps can be initiated.

If a human resource, health and safety, or employee health promotion committee already exists, the topic could be addressed through one of these established channels. These employee groups will be referred to as advisory committees in the following pages.

Functions of advisory committees

The advisory committees can function in a number of different ways:

1. A committee could be formed during the development phase and serve throughout the entire process:
   - gathering employee input
   - designing the policy
   - implementation
   - follow-up and evaluation.

   This has proven to be the most successful approach.
2. Responsibility for information-gathering could be given to an individual responsible for research, and a committee established at the policy design stage.
3. A separate committee could be established for each phase.

Whichever the approach chosen for your organization, the most important element is to ensure that employees are kept informed of the process.

Communication

Overview

Communication is critical to the successful establishment of a smoke-reduction policy. Your organization must make its intentions clear, and provide employees with justification for the proposed changes. These reasons will reflect your particular company goals and may include the following:

- protecting the health of your employees
- reinforcement of your organization's philosophy, mandate or image
- improving employee morale
- controlling costs of maintenance, absenteeism, etc.
- increasing productivity.

Creating two-way communication

Employees should not feel this policy is being imposed upon them. They should have ample opportunity to discuss the policy and be given assurances that their concerns and suggestions will be seriously considered as the policy is developed.

Appointment of a representative advisory committee is one step toward ensuring participation. Other steps might include:

- open meetings with top management to discuss issues of concern
- discussion at staff meetings of various policy aspects
- an anonymous question box, which allows the responses to be shared with all employees.

Use positive language

In all communications, both written and verbal, care should be taken to employ positive vocabulary, so as not to create hostility or raise unnecessary concerns. The following are some examples of positive language:

- Avoid the use of the term "right" to smoke, referring instead to a person's "desire," "choice" or "preference."
- Use words such as "clean air" or "smoke-free" rather than the negative "anti-smoking" terms.
- Refer to employees who smoke or do not smoke rather than smokers and non-smokers. This separates the behaviour from the person. Remember, it's the smoking that is being restricted, not the smoker.

Policy Design

Responsibility

Responsibility for policy design should be given to a well-respected member of management, possibly the same individual who coordinates the initial planning and communication stages. If this route is chosen, it will be necessary for this individual to work closely with the employee advisory committee. Some organizations choose to hire outside consultants to assist in coordination of the drafting, introduction and implementation of the program.

Process

Regardless of how your implementation structure is set up, the following are actions which should take place during the policy design stage.

1. Review employee input

Coordinator and/or advisory committee review employee input from surveys, meetings, informal discussions and correspondence and review relevant organizational characteristics to develop specifics of format and content.

2. Prepare draft policy

Based upon the review of employee input, the coordinator prepares a draft policy that clearly explains why the issue of smoke reduction is being addressed, what the policy covers and how it will be implemented and enforced.

3. Circulate draft policy

After general consensus has been reached by the advisory committee the draft is circulated to management, union representatives and interested employee groups not represented on the advisory committee.

4. Finalize the policy

Once the comments of all groups have been received, the coordinator and the advisory committee will meet to revise and finalize the policy.

5. Distribute the policy

Print a formal, written smoke-free policy and distribute it to all employees.

Policy Implementation

Create an action plan

The advisory committee (or the coordinator of policy development) should have an implementation action plan to work from. As a minimum this action plan would include:

- A timetable which allows at least 4-9 months advance notice of the effective policy date. This will allow workers the time to prepare themselves. January and September are good times to implement a policy.
- A phasing in of the policy, which could begin with common areas such as lobbies, meeting rooms and elevators.
- Distribution of the actual policy statement through a personal letter from top management to each employee, announcement of staff meetings, company and union newsletters or notices throughout the workplace.
- Dates for employee support programs such as stop smoking sessions.
- Procedures for policy enforcement.

Assess employee requirements

Employee requirements for educational, support and incentive programs should be assessed, and these programs started early in the phase-in period (see "Providing Employee Support").

Sharing information on the health hazards of smoking, the benefits of quitting and the health hazards of second-hand smoke all may contribute to increased knowledge of the issue, increased acceptance of the policy rationale and increased participation in support programs.

Implementation scheduling

When scheduling implementation activities:

1. Have a promotional campaign developed with a theme, which highlights the effective policy date.
2. Ensure signs are posted which designate the building as smoke-free, complemented by signs identifying smoking areas.
3. Organize open discussion sessions, educational and cessation programs complemented with films and computer programs.
4. Use all available communication channels including company newsletters, pay cheque stuffers, bulletin boards, etc.
5. Be creative!

Create a different environment

Consider environmental changes which reinforce the policy:

- remove cigarette vending machines and replace with health related items
- ban the sale of cigarettes on company property
- execute changes in ventilation systems as required
- institute consistent enforcement from the first day.

Remember that it is not easy to stop smoking, and an employer should provide time and support for employees who wish to stop.

Enforcement and Conflict

Overview

Immediate compliance with the policy should be expected, as with any other personnel policy. Enforcement guidelines must be outlined clearly to supervisory personnel and supported by top management. Firmness, with some flexibility, is required throughout the enforcement process.

Create a resolution procedure

Offer procedural guidelines to resolve any conflict that may arise.

An unsatisfied employee should discuss the complaint with an immediate supervisor. An explanation of why the policy as documented does not meet the needs of the particular situation and providing possible solutions for the problem should be included.

If the conflict cannot be resolved at the supervisory level, the standard grievance procedure can be followed. The advisory committee could become involved in recommending a solution to management.

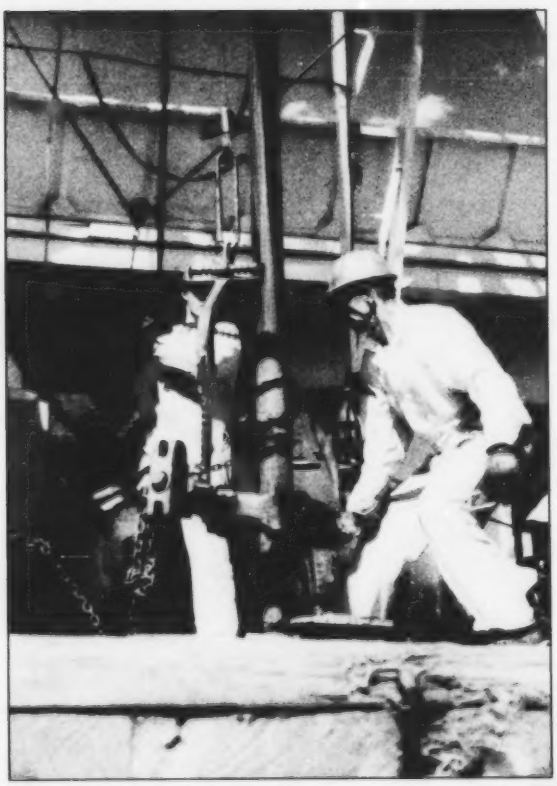
If the problem still remains unresolved, preference of non-smoking employees should take precedence.

Evaluation and Revision

Set up monitoring program

Once the program is in place, it should be carefully monitored to assess both successful activities and possible problem areas. A mechanism should be in place to ensure that this evaluation process is an ongoing one. Some suggested methods include:

- ongoing employee surveys
- requesting ongoing feedback from employees and the advisory committee
- requesting internal department feedback.



Evaluate progress

Using information obtained from the preliminary research stage as baseline information, both short-term and long-term evaluations can be done, time and budget permitting. Areas to monitor could include an evaluation of smoking cessation programs and incentives. This information can be shared with all employees in aggregate form, respecting employee confidentiality, to offer recognition and support of workers' efforts.

Where applicable, measure changes to the following areas:

- the costs of smoking in the workplace versus the impact of cessation incentive programs
- absenteeism rates of smoking versus non-smoking employees (and of former smokers), before and after quitting
- morale/attitude
- accident rates
- time savings associated with the smoking ritual
- cleaning and maintenance costs.

Providing Employee Support

Cessation Programs

Overview

There are substantial health benefits to be gained from quitting smoking, regardless of how long an individual has smoked. The majority of people who smoke say they would like to quit. Employers can play a significant role in helping them to do so through the implementation of a smoke-reduction, smoke-free or clean air policy. Offering worksite cessation programs can be a welcome support for employees and a demonstration of the company's commitment to employee well-being.

Cessation programs should not be mandatory. The purpose is not to force people to quite smoking, but rather to provide support for those who wish to quit.

Costs of programs

Cessation programs need not be costly. Programs are often available free or at a minimal charge through existing community or government resources. Programs which are offered after the policy is announced, but before implementation, give the worker a chance to quit before smoking is curtailed or prohibited at work.

Employers have the most success when they are able to offer employees a choice of several cessation programs, which include individual self-help as well as onsite and offsite group programs. A list of programs has been highlighted in The Alberta Tobacco Resource Guide (see page 11).

Success of cessation programs

Cessation programs are most successful when linked with several other strategies:

- a strong policy concerning smoking
- a broad-based health promotion program which encourages self-responsibility and a healthy lifestyle (i.e. nutrition, fitness, stress management and other topics)
- incentives which encourage and reward those who quit smoking
- environmental changes, such as improved air ventilation and the elimination of cigarette sales and vending machines
- in-house programs led by employees who have received appropriate training.

Incentive programs

Frequently companies offer incentives to give employees that extra motivation to quit smoking or to reinforce those who have quit or never started.

Some stop smoking incentives can include:

- refunding part of the cost for a smoking cessation program after a specific period of being smoke-free (three months, six months or one year)
- offering stop-smoking programs to both employees and family members
- holding a "Cold Turkey Day" in which employees who stop smoking for the entire day become eligible for a frozen turkey
- creating a regular drawing for a prize among those who have quit three, six, nine or twelve months
- providing a certificate of achievement to those who have quit
- promoting a workplace "ashtray dump" ceremony.

Ongoing Support

Ongoing support is required

Ongoing support is critical to the success of a company's smoke reduction policy. In addition to cessation programs, organizational support initiatives of an ongoing nature are required to reinforce workplace smoke reduction efforts.

Suggested activities for support

- Broaden the mandate of the advisory committee to support other organizational health promotion issues.
- Reinforce the involvement of friends and family. People supporting each other in change is very powerful.
- Encourage a "buddy system" or alternative support program.
- Try to replace anything that is taken away with something positive. For example, if cigarette vending machines are removed, replace them with a refrigerator stocked with healthy snacks, a reading rack of health information, or a bulletin board filled with success stories.
- Coordinate special events during National Non-Smoking Week in January which reinforce workplace initiatives.
- Use your newsletter to publish worker/management interviews, program/individual successes and program schedules.
- Shampoo rugs and paint walls when the policy is implemented.
- Involve the media in your success stories.
- Consider personnel policies which address health as opposed to sickness. For example, recognize those not required to use "sick days" by providing "well days" off.

Conclusion

Health promotion programs in the workplace yield benefits for employers and employees alike. A smoke reduction policy can be an important component of an organization's overall health promotion strategy.

There is much evidence to support such initiatives. The health risks to people who smoke are well-known and well documented, while recent studies show that people who do not smoke can be affected too. The economic consequences are significant, not the least of which is the loss in productivity due to illness. Increasingly, smoking is becoming a legal issue as well, with people turning to the courts to demand smoke-free workplaces.

It is within this context that more employers are deciding to institute some form of tobacco smoke reduction in their organizations. It is apparent that those policy makers who understand the dynamics of behaviour change and address these as part of their program development and implementation strategy are most successful. The key components to successful smoke free or smoke reduction policies are education, communication and commitment. The employer must learn what information and perceptions employees have, then provide them with whatever additional information they need to understand the issue and be receptive to the benefits of change.

All groups within the organization must be encouraged to get involved in the planning and implementation of the policy, and every employee must be kept informed of the progress. A representational advisory committee can help to fulfill this requirement. Finally, there must be an ongoing commitment on the part of management and employees alike to make the program work.

By working together, you and your employees will be able to design a program that is effective for your organization's needs. It can be a time-consuming and sometimes difficult process, but the benefits are well worth the time and the effort. A healthier workplace benefits everyone.

Appendices

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